H.B. 6380 Quick Facts: The Gender Wage Gap in Connecticut

Women, especially women of color, continue to earn significantly less than men.

- Women in Connecticut earn on average **$0.84** cents for every dollar paid to men.¹
- The gender wage gap is more severe for women of color in Connecticut:
  - Asian women working full time, year-round earn approximately **$0.83**
  - Black women working full time, year-round earn approximately **$0.57**
  - Native women working full time, year-round earn approximately **$0.53**
  - Latina women working full time, year-round earn approximately **$0.48**

Women’s earnings are critical to their families’ economic security.

- More than 170,000 family households in Connecticut are headed by women and depend on women’s earnings to stay financially afloat. Roughly 24% of those families, or 40,431 family households, earn incomes that fall below the poverty level. In Connecticut, 9.9% of women live in poverty, including 11.4% of Asian women, 13.9% of Black women, 22.8% of Latina women, and 17.8% of Native women.²
- Nearly 50% of female headed households in Connecticut under age 65 live within the ALICE threshold, with earnings above poverty level but below what is needed to meet a family’s basic needs such as health care, housing, child care, and transportation.³

COVID-19 heightens the impact of the wage gap on women, specifically women of color

- According to Essential Equity: Women, COVID-19 and Rebuilding Connecticut, women have filed the majority of initial and continuing unemployment claims in our state. More than 1 in 3 unemployment claims filed by women in our state were by women of color. Women’s high unemployment rate due to COVID-19 is expected to exacerbate gender and racial wage gaps.
- Nationally, about 80% of healthcare workers - including 88% of registered nurses - are women. Women make up 85% of home health and personal care aides, with 59% of them being women of color. Due to the gender wage gap, they lose $5,000 per year. Sixty-six percent (66%) of grocery store workers are women, and 43% of them are women of color. Women in this occupation lose $3,000 a year to the gender wage gap.
- Ninety-three percent (93%) of child care workers are women, and 44% of them are women of color. Child care workers lose $5,000 per year to the gender wage gap.

The wage gap adds up over time.

- On average, women in Connecticut lose $529,160 over the course of a 40-year career due to the gender wage gap. White women in Connecticut lose $637,280, Black women lose $1,212,480, Latinas lose $1,488,800 and Asian women lose $552,840 due to the gender wage gap.⁴
- The wage gap between mothers and fathers is even larger: mothers working full-time, year-round outside the home are typically paid just $0.75 cents for every dollar paid to fathers, a gap that translates to a loss of $1,275 a month or $15,300 annually and is significantly larger for mothers of color.
Salary Range Transparency: What is it?

- H.B. 6380 builds on existing law, including P.A. 15-196 that prohibits pay secrecy and P.A. 18-8 that prohibits the use of salary history in the application process, and will require employers to provide job applicants and employees salary ranges for vacant positions.

Salary Range Transparency: Why is it important?

- Secrecy around salary ranges harms all workers, especially women and people of color.
- Research shows that women often ask for less when they negotiate than men, even when they are equally qualified and applying for similar jobs as their male counterparts. That may be in part because it is common practice for job applicants to negotiate 10-20% more than their previous salary.
- Since women and people of color are already paid less than white, non-Hispanic men, they would need to ask for a very large percentage increase to be on par with their white, non-Hispanic male counterparts. Studies show that women are more successful in salary negotiations when provided context for negotiations, including the range and types of compensation and benefits available to them.
- Since employers tend to anchor salary negotiations - either consciously or subconsciously - to the job applicant’s first request, providing applicants with a salary range that the employer is willing to pay helps level the negotiating playing field, which can reduce gender wage gaps.
- The wage gap is much narrower in the public sector, where agencies typically operate within transparent and public pay structures - further evidence that greater pay transparency will reduce wage disparities.

Salary Range Transparency will benefit employers and employees because...

- Since employers are prohibited from asking about salary history in the application process, they may interview candidates that are outside of the pay scale for a given position. Salary range transparency solves this problem and allows employers to narrow applicants within their pay scale more efficiently.
- Eliminating the rumor mill around pay is critical to retention. H.B. 6380 will allow employees to approach their employer and request true information about where their pay sits within the salary scale. This is a tool of engagement for both parties to discuss skill development, pay grade, and other important information.
- Salary range transparency builds trust amongst employers, employees, and potential candidates. It also supports employees to understand and accept their salary.

Salary Range Transparency will follow steps made by...

- Colorado, 2019: The first state in the nation to require employers to include in every job posting the hourly or salary compensation or range for positions and a description of benefits
- Washington, 2019: Amended its equal pay law to require employers of 15 or more to provide minimum wage or salary of a position to job applicants who request it after they are offered a position
- California, 2017: Passed legislation that requires all employers to provide a pay scale based on an applicants’ reasonable request.
H.B. 6380 Quick Facts: Equal Pay for Comparable Work

Equal Pay for Comparable Work: What is it?
- Connecticut’s “equal pay for equal work” standard in CGS § 31-75 was drafted to cover women working in manufacturing jobs who performed tasks identical to the person next to them on the factory floor. This standard was effective at eliminating gendered pay scales for factory workers that existed at the time the language was written, but now is out of touch with the realities of the modern workplace.
- Equal pay for comparable work updates Connecticut’s existing pay discrimination statute to adhere to the realities of the workforce today. “Comparable work” is work that requires substantially similar skill, effort, and responsibility, and is performed under similar working conditions.

Equal Pay for Comparable Work: Why is it important?
- Equal pay for comparable work is more inclusive than the current “equal work” standard. Comparable work addresses the inequity in pay that results from a long history of sex-segregated occupations and different pay scales for jobs that are considered traditionally male vs. those that are considered traditionally female, even when they are substantially similar in skill and responsibility.
- Since the pay gap is also prevalent for women in leadership or higher-level roles, an “equal pay for comparable work” standard provides a more effective pay discrimination protection for all women.

Equal Pay for Comparable Work will benefit employers and employees because...
- Employers already create evaluations for each job based on the internal relationship it has to different jobs. “Comparable work” removes gender from the way employers evaluate the worth of all job classifications and prioritizes job duties and responsibilities instead of the gender of those performing them.

Equal Pay for Comparable Work: Real life examples
- Jancey v. Schools Committee of Everett (1995 Massachusetts Supreme Court case): Cafeteria workers, who had always been female, proved that custodian workers, who had always been male, were paid twice as much as the cafeteria workers. The two jobs are not equal but are comparable in skill and responsibility.
- Bureau of Labor & Industries v. Roseburg (1985 Oregon Court of Appeals case): Plaintiff was a transit coordinator who alleged her job was comparable to those of three male employees in the public works department: the shop superintendent, the maintenance foreman, and the water foreman. The court found that those jobs were valid comparators because: “They involved skills which could be gained on the job. They required technical skills which were substantial. They involved equivalent combinations of substantially similar supervisory, long-range planning, budget-preparing and other administrative skills, efforts and responsibilities.” The court explained that “comparable does not require equality but that two items have important common characteristics.”

Equal Pay for Comparable Work will follow steps made by...
- Massachusetts, 2016: H.B. 6380 mirrors Massachusetts’s law that changed the state’s “equal pay for equal work” standard to “equal pay for comparable work” in response to Jancey v. Schools Committee of Everett.
- In addition to Massachusetts, more than nine other states have passed similar language, including California, New Jersey, Illinois, Oregon, and Maryland.
Endnotes

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